

R.hone - 28.7.63.

I want to address these five minutes to our teenagers - the boys and girls whom everybody says to be the "hope of the country". I think I am right in saying that you are profoundly distressed by what has been happening in Guiana, as distressed as any older person can be. Some of you talk of finishing school and quitting the country. Some of you have decided to retreat into smaller groups - groups in which you can shut out the world outside and these pass the time away with a bit of dancing, smoking, and drinking, and, of course, bits of more personal activity as well. Some of you have decided to join one or other of the political parties and become what our newspapers call "activists" - you want to throw your energy into a mammoth battle for your party. I am afraid, however, the numbers who retreat from the adult world into their own little shells are frighteningly large. I say frighteningly large for this reason: Here is a country moving on into independence with all sorts of stupendous and grim problems and one finds so many young people who don't bother to think about them or only think about them when a crisis forces them to think about nothing else.

Of course, thinking yourself can be jolly hard, isn't much fun. You've got to think and ~~xxxx~~ talk it over with other people. Once you do this you will be surprised by where your thinking will lead you. So the thing to do is to get a group together with some specific problems in mind and get cracking on them. But for Heaven's sake don't waste your time formulating a constitution. I have seen groups kill themselves in the quest of a constitution. It seems to be an epidemic in the country. One group I heard of recently started off with a by number but spent so ~~xxxx~~ long on the constitution that now it only has enough people to fill the constitutional posts. Once you get your group going don't bother to clutter up your evenings with 'talks' - you know the sort of thing - a lecture by some eminent speaker, all very nice to listen to, and then, then what? A vacuum - a vacuum filled by another speaker, another vacuum and so on. This kills any group. If you are studying a problem and you reach a point where you've got stuck or you need expert advice, then call in an expert and when he has told you what you want to know get on with the job yourselves. But don't just talk or discuss, then let it rest there. Put your views together - roneo them off if you like, but the community know what you think. Your parents will probably get a shock. Some of your friends might take fright, but at least older people will realise that you have something to say and

if many of you feel strongly on a particular issue, then men in high positions will have to reckon with you.

Whatever your group is, it should consist of cells, you know small collections of 5 or 6 people, who meet regularly to deepen their knowledge of a specific problem or plan together a line of strategy. Members of a cell strengthen each other - they can discuss things more frankly than in a larger group and they can plan action without too much delay. There the cell breaks and each member forms a new cell. If you even want to influence people silently, this is the way to do it. And it is the most powerful way known to history. The early Christian practised it in the Roman Empire; the Methodists in the 18th Century had cells so did the French revolutionaries and so did the Bolsheviks in Russia.

If you teenagers want to save Guyana from itself, get cracking now. A democracy is only kept alive when youth are critical of leadership, when they think for themselves, and where from adolescence they get practised in making proper groups. If you are the hope of the country then your hope lies in solid organising power. You can have this power if you want it, but you won't get it merely by doing the twist, smoking the cigarette or going to the cinema.
